VISIT…

श्रीमद् भगवद्गीता

Lessons for Modern Management

B Mahadevan

EADS – SMI Professor of Sourcing & Supply Management

Indian Institute of Management Bangalore

Into the Future with Knowledge from Our Past, VTT Trust Seminar, Bangalore, Sep. 26, 2007

What is management?

In a nutshell …

- Body of knowledge that enables entities to
  - Deal with a multitude of situations involving people, process and the environment
  - Ensure work is done efficiently to deliver useful goods and services to the society
  - Sustain itself & the environment in the long run
- Good management must result in "greater satisfaction" of all stake holders

Modern Corporations

Very primitive form of existence

- Most large, apparently successful corporations are profoundly unhealthy
  - Average life expectancy of Fortune 500 companies is 40 – 50 years
  - 1/3rd of companies listed in Fortune 500 in 1970 vanished by 1983
  - 40% of all newly created companies last less than 10 years
- Managers in these companies experience
  - work stress, endless struggles for power & control,
  - cynicism & resignation
  - work environment that stifles rather than releases human imagination, energy & commitment

Source: Geus, A. (1997), The Living Company, Harvard Business School Press

Into the Future with Knowledge from Our Past, VTT Trust Seminar, Bangalore, Sep. 26, 2007

Modern Management

Perils – Pressures – Problems?

- We are still groping in the dark about
  - Dealing with people around us
  - Understanding what motivates oneself
  - Doing one's work in the most efficient manner
  - Creating leaders for "high performance" organisation
  - Creating organisations that can live long
- Complete disconnect between quality of life at large and work life
- Serious issues about sustenance of firms and the environment

श्रीमद् भगवद्गीता

Ultimate guide for management

- Central issue in श्रीमद् भगवद्गीता is all about
  - Doing work
  - In the most efficient manner
  - Ensuring work results in good benefits
- No other known source for extreme levels of motivation
  - How easy is it to shoot down all credible leaders of the society in one go?
- Vital clues for alternative paradigms of management
- Logical explanation for how to do certain things in the process of creating high performance entities

Into the Future with Knowledge from Our Past, VTT Trust Seminar, Bangalore, Sep. 26, 2007

Modern Management Practices

Current Paradigms

- High Performance is
  - Not unambiguously defined & understood
  - No methods found to achieve it
- Notion of time
  - Qtr-on-Qtr & Year-on-Year performance
  - Eternal conflict between short term & long term
- Performance metrics & assessment
  - World of Duality
- "Gross" subdues "Subtle" in everything that we see, do, & decide
- Our Definition of "work" is narrow

In Gita, we find antidotes to all these and alternative ideas to pursue

Performance Vs High Performance

What one can expect…

Performance	High Performance
☐ Growing a firm by 40% or even 100% consecutively for a few years	☐ Having quintessential attributes that make a firm live for a much longer time
☐ Motivating oneself and the subordinates to meet targets (however high they are set)	☐ Understand the value of outgrowing the world of targets & dualities
☐ Beating the competition now and in the future	☐ Work beyond the world of currently known efficiency metrics
☐ Creating good managers who ■ Develop good procedures for making not too difficult decisions ■ Identify good opportunities for growth in the near term ■ Can apparently "keep" their subordinates happy	☐ Creating a few leaders who ■ Have extreme levels of passion, attitude & courage to do good to the entire system (firm & the environment) ■ Can face toughest challenges, guided by role clarity ■ Enable everyone in the system to discover their inner happiness

Managers can get good performance; Leaders will get high performance

Into the Future with Knowledge from Our Past, VTT Trust Seminar, Bangalore, Sep. 26, 2007

Challenges facing a leader

Decision making is not easy always!

तत्रापश्यत्स्थितान्पार्थः पितॄनथ पितामहान्।
आचार्यान्मातुलान्भ्रातॄन्
पुत्रान्पौत्रान्सखींस्तथा ॥ 1.26.
श्वशुरान्सुहृदश्चैव सेनयोरुभयोरपि।

There Arjuna saw in front of him on both sides of the armey Fatherly figures, Grandfather, Guru, Uncles, the next two generations below him, poeple from "in law", close friends...

Challenges facing a leader

Facing crude realities is inevitable!

सीदन्ति मम गात्राणि मुखं च परिशुष्यति ।
वेपथुश्च शरीरे मे रोमहर्षश्च जायते ॥ 1.29
गाण्डीवं स्रंसते हस्तात् त्वक्चैव परिदह्यते ।
न च शक्नोम्यवस्थातुं भ्रमतीव च मे मनः ॥ 1.30

My limbs fail me; My mouth is parched
I shiver all over the body; My hair stands on the end
Gandhiva slips out of my hand; My skins burn
I can not go through this experience; My mind whirls

Into the Future with Knowledge from Our Past, VTT Trust Seminar, Bangalore, Sep. 26, 2007

Avoiding tough decisions

Argument 1: Happiness not guaranteed?

येषामर्थे काङ्क्षितं नः राज्यं भोगाः सुखानि च ।
त इमाऽवस्थिता युद्धे प्राणांस्त्यक्त्वा धनानि च ॥ 1.33
आचार्याः पितरः पुत्राः तथैव च पितामहाः ।
मातुलाः श्वशुराः पौत्राः श्यालाः सम्बन्धिनस्तथा ॥ 1.34

स्वजनं हि कथं हत्वा सुखिनः स्याम माधव ॥ 1.37.

How can one be happy after killing one's own people?
Especially when I do not strongly desire wealth, kingdom and associated pleasures...

Avoiding tough decisions

Argument 2: War creates bigger problem

कुलक्षये प्रणश्यन्ति कुलधर्माः सनातनाः ।
धर्मे नष्टे कुलं कृत्स्नं अधर्मोऽभिभवत्युत ॥ 1.40.

Decay of family – Decay of family values – Decay of culture – Decay of societal values

अधर्माभिभवात्कृष्ण प्रदुष्यन्ति कुलस्त्रियः ।
स्त्रीषु दुष्टासु वार्ष्णेय जायते वर्णसङ्करः ॥ 1.41.

Decay of societal values – Corruption of women - Whole society suffers

Into the Future with Knowledge from Our Past, VTT Trust Seminar, Bangalore, Sep. 26, 2007

Avoiding tough decisions

Argument 2: War creates bigger problem

दोषैरेतैः कुलघ्नानां वर्णसङ्करकारकैः ।
उत्साद्यन्ते जातिधर्माः कुलधर्माश्च शाश्वताः ॥ 1.43.

By these misdeeds – Confusion in the society, class may happen on a permanent basis…

Avoiding tough decisions

Argument 3: An impractical idea!

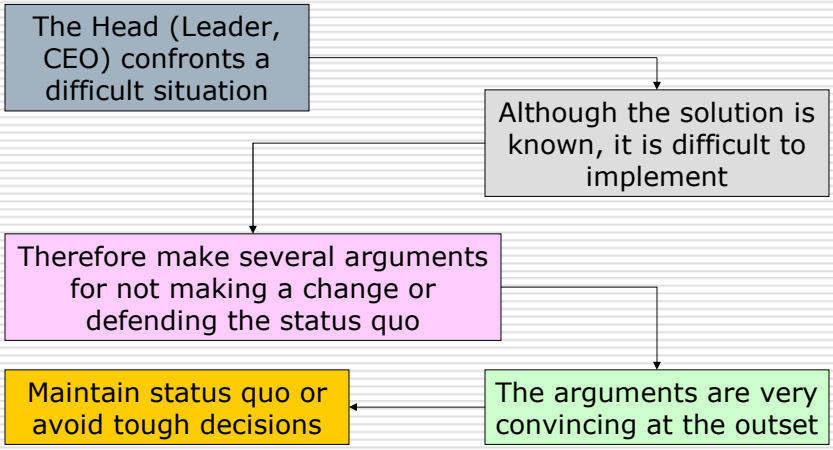
कथं भीष्ममहं सङ्ख्ये द्रोणं च मधुसूदन ।
इषुभिः प्रतियोत्स्यामि पूजार्हौ अरिसूदन ॥ 2.4.
गुरूनहत्वा हि महानुभावान्
श्रेयो भोक्तुं भैक्ष्यमपीह लोके ।
हत्वार्थकामांस्तु गुरुनिहैव
भुञ्जीय भोगान् रुधिरप्रदिग्धान् ॥ 2.5.

How can I fight those who are worthy of worship? I do not want to enjoy the fruits obtained through bloodshed

Into the Future with Knowledge from Our Past, VTT Trust Seminar, Bangalore, Sep. 26, 2007

Challenges of high performance

Overcoming these conflicts is essential


The Head (Leader, CEO) confronts a difficult situation
Although the solution is known, it is difficult to implement
Therefore make several arguments for not making a change or defending the status quo
The arguments are very convincing at the outset
Maintain status quo or avoid tough decisions

High Performing organisations need leaders who do not get stuck like this

New Paradigms in Management

Our current notion of time is wrong

अशोच्यान् अन्वशोचस्त्वं प्रज्ञावादांश्च भाषसे ।
गतासूनगतासूंश्च नानुशोचन्ति पण्डिताः ॥ 2.11.
नत्वेवाहं जातु नासं न त्वं नेमे जनाधिपाः ।
न चैव न भविष्यामः सर्वे वयमतः परम् ॥ 2.12.
देहिनोऽस्मिन्यथा देहे कौमारं यौवनं जरा ।
तथा देहान्तरप्राप्तिः धीरस्तत्र न मुह्यति ॥ 2.13.

Do not bother about people who come and go since it is fundamental nature of gross objects to keep changing

Gita forces one to revisit the notion of "Long Term"

Into the Future with Knowledge from Our Past, VTT Trust Seminar, Bangalore, Sep. 26, 2007

New Paradigms of Management

Deeply understand the changeless

- Slokas 17 – 30 in chapter 2 provides multiple perspectives on the changeless character of Atman
  - That which has an end cannot be eternal truth
  - That which cannot be destroyed/killed is the real truth
  - In a short time we see several changes
  - We discard an old shirt when it is worn out and wear a new one
  - Gross aspects undergo change and not subtle aspects
  - Do not have the illusion that you make changes
- Understanding the notion of changelessness is the fundamental building block of any change management initiative

Quintessential aspect of anything is subtle, it has a changeless character

Work is fundamental to prosperity

बुद्ध्या युक्तो यया पार्थ
कर्मबन्धं प्रहास्यसि

नेहाभिक्रमनाशोऽस्ति
प्रत्यवायो न विद्यते

Right knowledge about work is fundamental to prosperity & progress

Work with Yoga Buddhi does not produce contradicting results

Developing a sense of equanimity is critical for producing good work

Such a method of working results in very good efficiency hitherto unknown

योगः कर्मसु कौशलम

समत्वं योग उच्यते

This is true in the field of management also; Gita defines work differently

Into the Future with Knowledge from Our Past, VTT Trust Seminar, Bangalore, Sep. 26, 2007

New Paradigms of Management

Work: fundamental definition

कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते मा फलेषु कदाचन ।
मा कर्मफलहेतुर्भूः मा ते सङ्गोऽस्त्वकर्मणि ॥ 2.47.

Work

- You have the right to work
- You have no right to fruits
- You have no right to the root causes of fruits
- You have no right to revel in inaction

मा फलेषु कदाचन

The underlying logic

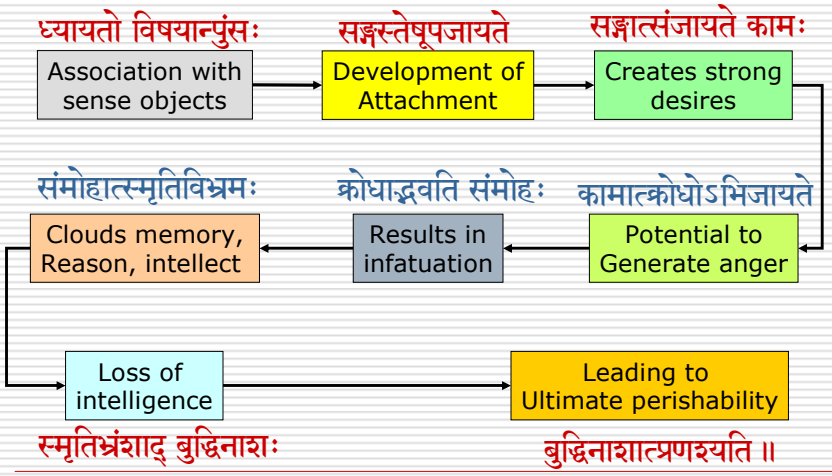
- Wary of failures, we may refuse to undertake great activities (modern risk management issue comes into play)
- Focus on ends instead of means
- Process orientation will give way for result orientation
- You tend to escape the dynamics of "present" and go after "future"

When we do good work, we tend to say "I was lost in the work". **मा फलेषु कदाचन** enables all of us to get lost in the work for ever

Into the Future with Knowledge from Our Past, VTT Trust Seminar, Bangalore, Sep. 26, 2007

Effect of claiming for fruits of action

A logical set of events



Every major blunder in decision making in personal & corporate life could be explained with this framework; It often starts with deep desire for fruits of action

New Paradigms of Management

Outgrow the world of dualities

मात्रास्पर्शास्तु कौन्तेय शीतोष्णसुखदुःखदाः ।
आगमापायिनोऽनित्याः तांस्तितिक्षस्व भारत ॥ 2.14.
यं हि न व्यथयन्त्येते पुरुषं पुरुषर्षभ ।
समदुःखसुखं धीरं सोऽमृतत्वाय कल्पते ॥ 2.15.
योगस्थः कुरु कर्माणि सङ्गं त्यक्त्वा धनंजय ।
सिद्ध्यसिद्ध्योः समो भूत्वा समत्वं योग उच्यते ॥ 2.48.

Developing a sense of equanimity is fundamental to sustained progress

Into the Future with Knowledge from Our Past, VTT Trust Seminar, Bangalore, Sep. 26, 2007

Different facets of equanimity

Chapter 14: Guna Treya Vibhaga Yoga

समदुःखसुखः स्वस्थः समलोष्टाश्मकांचनः ।
तुल्यप्रियाप्रियो धीरः तुल्यनिन्दात्मसंस्तुतिः ॥ 14.24.
मानापमानयोस्तुल्यः तुल्यो मित्रारिपक्षयोः ।
सर्वारम्भपरित्यागी गुणातीतः स उच्यते ॥ 14.25.

Those who have been able to develop a deep sense of equanimity by going beyond the world of opposites have the leadership character (for creating a high performing organisation)

योगः कर्मसु कौशलम

A new meaning for efficiency

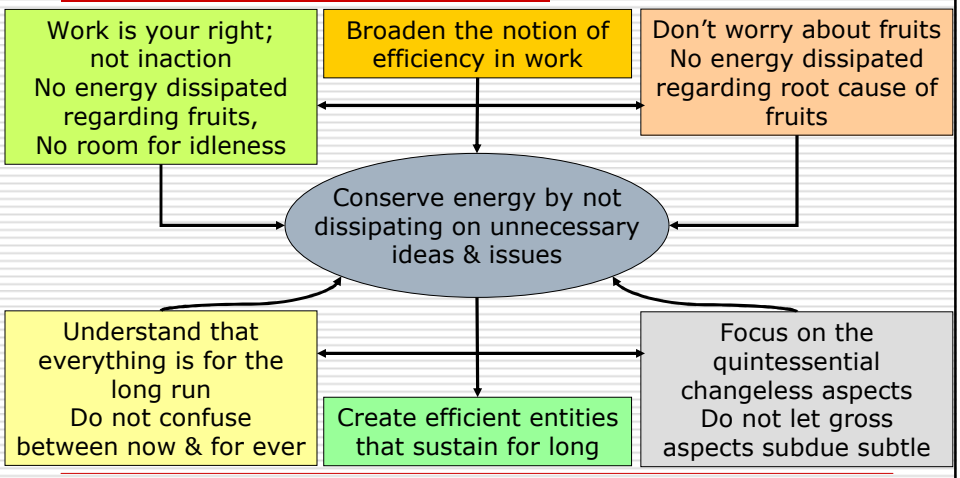
- Traditional View: A means for worldly welfare
  - More material output, using fewer input
  - Stress on quantity threatens modern society
    - Broken person with high productive efficiency is a common possibility
    - Economic prosperity and poverty in mind & heart
- Gita View: A means for also inner development
  - Done any good to you, made you broader
  - What difference did it make to the society?
- Have you become qualitatively richer?
  - Going into human nature beyond sensory level

Good workers, developed with high character, public spirit, service & dedication will be the greatest asset to any nation. योगः कर्मसु कौशलम addresses this critical aspect

Into the Future with Knowledge from Our Past, VTT Trust Seminar, Bangalore, Sep. 26, 2007

Work your way to prosperity

(material & spiritual)


Work is your right; not inaction
No energy dissipated regarding fruits,
No room for idleness
Broaden the notion of efficiency in work
Don't worry about fruits
No energy dissipated regarding root cause of fruits
Conserve energy by not dissipating on unnecessary ideas & issues
Understand that everything is for the long run
Do not confuse between now & for ever
Create efficient entities that sustain for long
Focus on the quintessential changeless aspects
Do not let gross aspects subdue subtle

श्रीमद् भगवद्गीता

Ultimate guide for management

- Make efforts to understand & appreciate the teachings & their contemporary relevance
- Actively participate to create the new paradigms in management
- Have the satisfaction of discovering the truth behind leading a "satisfied" life as opposed to the now popular "wealthy" life that can potentially lead you to a dead end somewhere down the lane

Into the Future with Knowledge from Our Past, VTT Trust Seminar, Bangalore, Sep. 26, 2007

Different facets of equanimity

Chapter 5: Sanyasa Yoga

विद्याविनयसंपन्ने ब्राह्मणे गवि हस्तिनि ।
शुनि चैव श्वपाके च पण्डिताः समदर्शिनः ॥ 5.18.
इहैव तैर्जितः सर्गः येषां साम्ये स्थितं मनः ।
निर्दोषं हि समं ब्रह्म तस्माद् ब्रह्मणि ते स्थिताः ॥ 5.19.

Different facets of equanimity

Chapter 6: Dhyana Yoga

जितात्मनः प्रशान्तस्य परमात्मा समाहितः ।
शीतोष्णसुखदुःखेषु तथा मानापमानयोः ॥ 6.7.
ज्ञानविज्ञानतृप्तात्मा कूटस्थो विजितेन्द्रियः ।
युक्त इत्युच्यते योगी समलोष्टाश्मकांचनः ॥ 6.8.
सुहृन्मित्रार्युदासीन मध्यस्थद्वेष्यबन्धुषु ।
साधुष्वपि च पापेषु समबुद्धिर्विशिष्यते ॥ 6.9.

Into the Future with Knowledge from Our Past, VTT Trust Seminar, Bangalore, Sep. 26, 2007

Different facets of equanimity

Chapter 6: Dhyana Yoga…

सर्वभूतस्थमात्मानं सर्वभूतानि चात्मनि ।
ईक्षते योगयुक्तात्मा सर्वत्र समदर्शनः ॥ 6.29.
आत्मौपम्येन सर्वत्र समं पश्यति योऽर्जुन ।
सुखं वा यदि वा दुःखं स योगी परमो मतः ॥ 6.32.

Different facets of equanimity

Chapter 12: Bhakti Yoga

संनियम्येन्द्रियग्रामं सर्वत्र समबुद्धयः ।
ते प्राप्नुवन्ति मामेव सर्वभूतहिते रताः ॥ 12.4.
अद्वेष्टा सर्वभूतानां मैत्रः करुण एव च ।
निर्ममो निरहङ्कारः समदुःखसुखः क्षमी ॥ 12.13.

Into the Future with Knowledge from Our Past, VTT Trust Seminar, Bangalore, Sep. 26, 2007

Different facets of equanimity

Chapter 13: Kshetra - Kshetragna Yoga

असक्तिरनभिष्वङ्गः पुत्र दार गृहादिषु ।
नित्यं च समचित्तत्वं इष्टानिष्टोपपत्तिषु ॥ 13.10.
समं पश्यन्हि सर्वत्र समवस्थितमीश्वरम् ।
न हिनस्त्यात्मनात्मानं ततो याति परां गतिम् ॥ 13.29.